

## Happy New Year!

Your efforts in helping Medicare beneficiaries choose a drug card and complete the enrollment process are truly inspiring! In this week's *Covering America*, we applaud your solid effort in 2004 as we look forward to even greater success in 2005.

You have approximately six weeks left to help enroll Medicare beneficiaries in a drug discount card and Transitional Assistance before the end of your subcontract. Don't slow down! There are millions of beneficiaries who have yet to sign up but who are eligible for these prescription drug savings. Those who qualify for the \$600 credit in 2005 need to enroll by March 31 to receive the full \$600 credit for the year. The more quickly they secure and use their credit, the more quickly they will access the added "wrap-around" benefits for which they may qualify. AARP estimates that nearly 80% of low-income beneficiaries qualify for at least one wrap-around benefit from participating pharmaceutical companies and drug card sponsors.

**This issue of *Covering America* invites you to make three New Year's resolutions. Try these on for size:**

- "I resolve to meet and/or exceed my assistance and enrollment goals!" Looking for a motivational speech? Just say, "**Assistance matters but, enrollment counts!**" Remember, everyone's overall goal is to help seniors receive maximum benefit. Focus your efforts on assistance and enrollment during the final weeks of this initiative.
- "I resolve to be courageous, to grasp opportunities!" **Apply for incentive funding.** Proposals will be accepted until Jan. 21<sup>st</sup>! If your organization has accomplished the performance objectives for education and outreach and assistance in enrollment as set forth in your subcontract with Ogilvy, you are eligible to apply for additional funds of up to 50 percent of your original award.
- "I resolve to applaud the achievements of friends and colleagues!" Think you have a hero in your midst? Nominate them for our **CBO Recognition Program**. More information on this exciting program to follow soon!

If these New Year's resolutions resonate with you be sure to read the rest of our newsletter - it's packed with valuable information.

- Availability of the CMS CD-ROM with radio public service announcements in English and Spanish
- New developments in a one-step application process for online enrollment
- Enhancements to the CMS PDAP and Access to Benefits enrollment databases
- Enrollment success stories from the field
- Spotlight on Valley Baptist Health System

Ogilvy is here to help you be successful. Please remember to tell us what upcoming events and activities you are hosting or if you need assistance brainstorming or planning an event. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact us at any time!

## **Organizations of the Week**

Valley Baptist Health System (VBHS)  
Harlingen, TX

“Our consistent outreach efforts, combined with the creation of a call center to screen and enroll our patients has contributed to our overall success with the Medicare-Approved Drug Discount Card and Transitional Assistance program,” said Erin Potts, Project Coordinator, Valley Baptist Health System. It is this kind of initiative and creativity that has helped VBHS educate their community and increase their enrollment and transitional credit numbers. Another reason VBHS has been so successful is the personal attention they give to the eligible beneficiaries with whom they interact. When they originally started the program, VBHS sent a letter to eligible Medicare patients to give them a general overview of the program to avoid confusion. According to Erin this type of effort served as the catalyst for their program, “For those patients that were receptive and called us back, we used a data collection template to guide our phone interviews with the seniors. We asked the patient information relating to his/her most expensive medications and then we went to the Medicare website to perform pricing and local pharmacy searches. Once we knew what card(s) and pharmacies offered the best pricing, we informed the patient and asked them to call the card company and request an application. We then asked the patient to contact us once the application was received and we assisted them with completing it.”

VBHS has gone the extra mile to make sure the people they are helping to enroll are understanding both the Medicare-approved drug card and Transitional Assistance program. In addition to television interviews in both English and Spanish, VBHS also created a newsletter that was sent to all of its Medicare patients from the last two years. The newsletter was well received and responses were directed to the call center, which then assisted them with the enrollment process.

As a result of their efforts, VBHS is making a significant difference in the lives of Medicare beneficiaries throughout Harlingen, Texas.

To learn more about Valley Baptist Health System, email Erin Potts at [erin.potts@valleybaptist.net](mailto:erin.potts@valleybaptist.net).

## **What They're Saying...**

“A Medicare beneficiary from Tennessee applied for a drug discount card and the Transitional Assistance credit and learned that her application would not be processed for several weeks. In response to her frustration about not receiving immediate benefits, the drug card sponsor offered to speak with her pharmacist to verify her enrollment so the senior could use her assistance immediately, before she had even received her card in the mail. This is an excellent example of the Aging Commission, card sponsors, and pharmacists are working together as a team to serve seniors in need.”

-*Carla D. Mitchell*, Aging Commission of the Mid-South  
Memphis, TN

“We had an ‘all hands on deck’ for the end of the year push. The online ‘enroll now’ button for Transitional Assistance made it so swift to get people enrolled by the deadline. We got it down to 10 – 15 minutes per person, mailing them confirmation and a brief letter of what to expect. They were flabbergasted that they could save that much money with one simple phone call to our organization!”

-*Melody Gillard-Juarez*, Southwestern Oregon Community College / RSVP  
Bandon, OR

“The medical clinic at the Owens Health and Wellness Center provides outpatient and inpatient care for senior citizens. The clinic has partnered with the Health and Wellness Center to provide a two-in-one service initiative. At the time of clinic visits, the physician counsels Medicare beneficiaries about the Medicare-Approved Prescription Drug Discount Card, and refers them to our administrative offices to complete the enrollment process immediately following treatment. This has been an effective approach!”

-*Felicia Whittington*, Tougaloo College Owens Health and Wellness Center  
Tougaloo, MS

## **Campaign Resources**

### Medicare-Approved PSAs

CMS has developed two radio public service announcements (PSA) – in English and in Spanish – to promote the Medicare-Approved Drug Discount Card Program and Transitional Assistance Program. We encourage you to use these PSAs. Please contact your Regional Coordinator at Ogilvy to request a copy.

### Enrollment Made Easier

In December, both CMS and the Access to Benefits Coalition (ABC) added new functionality to the Prescription Drug and Other Assistance Programs database (PDAP) and BenefitsCheckUpRx databases allowing Medicare beneficiaries who are eligible for the Transitional Assistance to complete and submit a drug discount card application form online instantly, eliminating the time consuming process of printing and mailing the form in to be processed. Additionally, a list of the best five cards is now generated based on the best match between the applicant's medicines and the pharmaceutical wraparounds available through the card. The applicant can easily pick the best card accepted at a drug store he or she uses.

PDAP

<http://www.medicare.gov/AssistancePrograms/home.asp?version=default&browser=IE%7C6%7CWinXP&language=English&defaultstatus=0&pagelist=Home&dest=>)

BenefitsCheckUpRx

[http://bcuoe2.benefitscheckup.org/before\\_you\\_start.cfm?cfid=197767&cftoken=22905706&cso\\_id=0&partner\\_id=7&subset\\_id=12&language\\_id=EN&client\\_id=NULL&user\\_id=NULL&preserve=true](http://bcuoe2.benefitscheckup.org/before_you_start.cfm?cfid=197767&cftoken=22905706&cso_id=0&partner_id=7&subset_id=12&language_id=EN&client_id=NULL&user_id=NULL&preserve=true))

## **Bi-Weekly Report Update**

### **Numbers from Sept. 1 through Dec. 31st 2004**

(Numbers in parentheses reflect totals through the end of November 2004)

Educated:

**33,706,018** (20,901,133)

Assisted in Enrollment:

**967,771** (866,949)

Enrolled in Drug Card:

**27,419** (15,762)

Enrolled in Transitional Assistance:

**14,250** (7,848)